matters arising from an application not directly related to the requested correction of military records. Such comments and recommendations will be separately communicated and will not be included in the record of proceedings or given to the applicant or counsel.

(l) *Final action by the Board.* The Board acts for the Secretary of the Air Force and its decision is final when it:

(1) Denies any application (except under 10 U.S.C. 1034).

(2) Grants any application in whole or part when the relief was recommended by the official preparing the advisory opinion, was unanimously agreed to by the panel, and does not affect an appointment or promotion requiring confirmation by the Senate, and does not affect a matter for which the Secretary of the Air Force or his or her delegee has withheld decision authority or required notification before final decision.

(3) The Board sends the record of proceedings on all other applications to the Secretary of the Air Force or his or her designee for final decision.

(m) The Board may identify DoD or Air Force policies, instructions, guidance or practices that are leading to, or likely to lead to unsound business decisions, unfair results, waste of government funds or public criticism. The Board will forward such observations directly to the appropriate offices of the Secretariat and/or Air Staff for review and evaluation. Such observations will not be included in the record of proceedings.

§ 865.5 Decision of the Secretary of the Air Force.

(a) The Secretary may direct such action as he or she deems appropriate on each case, including returning the case to the Board for further consideration. Cases returned to the Board for further reconsideration will be accompanied by a brief statement of the reasons for such action. If the Secretary does not accept the Board's recommendation, the Secretary's decision will be in writing and will include a brief statement of the grounds for his/her final decision.

(b) *Decisions in cases under the Military Whistleblowers Protection Act.* The Secretary will issue decisions on such cases within 180 days after receipt of the case and will, unless the full relief requested is granted, inform applicants of their right to request review of the decision by the Secretary of Defense (SecDef). Applicants will also be informed:

(1) Of the name and address of the official to whom the request for review must be submitted.

(2) That the request for review must be submitted within 90 days after receipt of the decision by the Secretary of the Air Force.

(3) That the request for review must be in writing and include the applicant's name, address, and telephone number; a copy of the application to the AFBCMR and the final decision of the Secretary of the Air Force; and a statement of the specific reasons the applicant is not satisfied with the decision of the Secretary of the Air Force.

(4) That the request must be based on the Board record; requests for review based on factual allegations or evidence not previously presented to the Board will not be considered under this paragraph but may be the basis for reconsideration by the Board under § 865.6.

(c) In cases under § 865.5(b) of this part which involve additional issues not cognizable under that paragraph, the additional issues may be considered separately by the Board under § 865.3 and § 865.4 of this part. The special time limit in § 865.5 (b) does not apply to the decision concerning these additional issues.

(d) *Decisions in high profile or sensitive cases.* Prior to taking final action on a BCMR application that has generated, or is likely to generate, significant public or Congressional interest, the Secretarial designee will provide the case record of proceedings through Secretarial channels to OSAF so that the Secretary can determine whether to decide the case personally or take other action the Secretary deems appropriate.

§ 865.6 Reconsideration of applications.

(a) The Board may reconsider an application if the applicant submits newly discovered relevant evidence